

From the Upper Chamber



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Report for Thursday, February 21, 2008

The twenty-first day of the 2008 legislative session was called to order by Lieutenant Governor **Casey Cagle**.

Senator **Don Balfour** of the 9th stated that the journal had been read and was found to be correct.

Senate Bills 490 and 492-501, Senate Resolution 996, House Bills 1015, 1016, 1026, 1123 and 1208 and House Resolution 1206 were read for the first time and assigned to committees. The clerk then read the reports of standing committees and second readers.

After the morning roll call, Sen. **Mitch Seabaugh** of the 28th led the Senate in the Pledge of Allegiance. He then introduced the *Chaplain of the Day*, Pastor **Jimmy Patterson** of First Baptist Church in Newnan, who led the Senate in the daily devotional.

Sen. **Dan Moody** of the 56th took the well on a Point of Personal Privilege to discuss legislation he has sponsored that seeks to provide basic therapy services for disabled children.

The Senate Consent Calendar for Privileged Resolutions, consisting of SR 989-995 and 997-1002, was unanimously adopted.

Sen. **Chip Pearson** of the 51st asked that SB 484 be withdrawn from the Senate Government Oversight Committee and recommitted to the Senate Economic Development Committee. There was no objection.

The Senate Local Consent Calendar, consisting of HB 1162, 1164, 1115, 1166 and 1167, was adopted by a vote of 45 to 0.

The clerk read SR 897, which recognizes today as Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Recognition Day. Sen. **Jack Murphy** of the 27th took the rostrum to introduce several EMS

personnel to the Senate. Sen. **Jeff Mullis** of the 53rd took the rostrum to commend the efforts of the Senate EMS Study Committee that met during the interim.

The clerk read HB 926, which brings Georgia tax code into compliance with the Internal Revenue Code.

Sen. **Chip Rogers** of the 21st took the well to encourage adoption of the bill.

The Floor Substitute to HB 926 was unanimously adopted.

HB 926 passed by substitute by a vote of 45 to 0.

The clerk then read SB 381, also known as the *No Heartbeat Act*, which allows parents of a stillborn child to request a birth certificate that would note the child's condition.

Sen. **Dan Weber** of the 40th took the well to present the bill.

SB 381 passed by a vote of 48 to 0.

Sergeant-at-Arms **Lorenzo Wallace** escorted Sen. **Pearson** and his guests to the rostrum.

The clerk read SR 848, which congratulates **John Didicher**, Sen. **Pearson's** grandfather, on the occasion of his 100th birthday. Sen. **Pearson** took the rostrum to introduce members of his family to the Senate.

The clerk read SR 1005, which commends the Savannah community businesses, organizations and individuals who responded to the recent sugar plant explosion. President Pro Tempore **Eric Johnson** of the 1st took the rostrum to recognize several of the employees of the sugar plant seated in the Senate gallery.

The clerk read SR 999, which recognizes the 2007 Georgia School for the Deaf football team on winning the National Eight-Man Deaf Prep Football Championship. Sen. **Preston Smith** of the 52nd took the rostrum to introduce members of the team seated in the Senate gallery.

Sen. **Ed Harbison** of the 15th took the rostrum to introduce the *Doctor of the Day*, Dr. **George Shannon** of Columbus.

SR 722 was read, which creates the Grady Oversight Committee that will provide legislative oversight to the hospital.

Sen. **David Shafer** of the 48th took the well to speak to the resolution.

Sen. **Vincent Fort** of the 39th took the well to speak against the legislation. He yielded to questions from Senators **Shafer** and **Emanuel Jones** of the 10th.

SR 722 was adopted by a vote of 46 to 6.

The clerk read SR 1002, which commends the University of West Georgia Cheerleading Team for their success.

Sen. **Bill Hamrick** of the 30th took the rostrum to speak to the resolution.

SB 353 was read, known as the *Public Hospital Integrity Act*, which prevents anyone from serving in a governing capacity if they have a conflicting interest with the hospital.

Sen. **Shafer** took the well to urge passage of the bill.

Sen. **Fort** took the well to speak to his Amendment 1, which states that those with a conflict of interest in Grady cannot serve in a governing capacity of the hospital.

Amendment 1 was unanimously adopted.

The Committee Substitute to SB 353 was unanimously adopted as amended.

SB 353 passed by substitute by a vote of 51 to 0.

The clerk read SR 748, which urges Grady Hospital to adopt changes to its employee health benefits plan, and encourages hospital employees to utilize Grady as their primary healthcare resource.

Sen. **Shafer** took the well to present the resolution, and yielded to questions from Sens. **Fort** and **Renee Unterman** of the 45th.

SR 748 was adopted by a vote of 51 to 2.

SB 430 was read, which allows the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) to compare DNA samples of a suspect from its database to those collected from evidentiary materials.

Sen. **Hamrick** took the well to present the bill.

SB 430 passed by a vote of 47 to 1.

Sen. **Jack Hill** of the 4th moved that HB 989 be placed at the foot of the calendar. There was no objection.

The clerk read SB 395, which creates the Safety Net Clinic grant program to provide funds for the care of indigent and elderly patients.

Sen. **Greg Goggans** of the 7th took the well to present the bill, explaining that it would give greater healthcare access to indigent and elderly patients.

Sen. **Judson Hill** of the 32nd took the well to urge passage of the bill.

SB 395 passed by a vote of 49 to 0.

The clerk read SB 300, known as the *Transparency in Government Act*, which would place all state expenditures on a Web site to make the information available to the public.

Sen. **Rogers** took the well to present the bill.

The Committee Substitute to SB 300 was unanimously adopted.

SB 300 passed by substitute by a vote of 49 to 0.

The clerk read SB 421, which increases the penalties for those under 21 who manufacture or possess a fake ID. Sen. **Pearson** took the well to present the bill. He yielded to questions from Sen. **Michael Meyer von Bremen** of the 12th.

SB 421 passed by a vote of 46 to 5.

The clerk read SR 967, which commends the Empire Board of Realtists, Inc. for its success. Sen. **Gail Davenport** of the 44th took the rostrum to introduce members of the board to the Senate.

The Senate stood at ease for an hour for lunch and returned at 1:00 p.m.

The clerk read HB 989, the Supplemental FY 2008 Appropriations bill.

Sen. **Jack Hill** of the 4th took the well to explain the Committee Substitute concerning the FY 08 amended budget. He yielded to questions from Sen. **Valencia Seay** of the 34th.

Sen. **Jones** took the well to explain Amendment 1, which seeks to restore education equalization funding by reducing funds from prepaying debt service. He yielded to questions from Sens. **Seay**, **Ed Tarver** of the 22nd, **Nan Orrock** of the 36th, **Gloria Butler** of the 55th, **Robert Brown** of the 26th and **Hill** of the 4th.

Sen. **Johnson** took the well to address his concerns with the FY 2008 budget. He yielded to questions from Sen. **Brown**.

Amendment 1 failed by a vote of 17 to 36.

The Committee Substitute to HB 989 was unanimously adopted.

HB 989 passed by substitute by a vote of 51 to 2.

Following the afternoon announcements, Majority Leader **Tommie Williams** of the 19th moved that the Senate stand adjourned until 9:00 a.m., Friday, February 22.

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